



# Guide to Loneliness

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This package was created by the Healthy U program at the University of Manitoba. Healthy U is a UM student group made up of a team of friendly volunteers who are trained student health educators.

We provide students with validated health information through our health packages and outreach events, online resources, and one-on-one support. Health topics that we provide resources on include mental health, sexual health, physical health, substance use, social and cultural wellness, and finding a balance.

Please reach out to us if you have any questions at:  
[healthyu@umanitoba.ca](mailto:healthyu@umanitoba.ca)



# Social Needs

"I'm surrounded by people but I feel so alone"



68%

of U of M students felt lonely at some point in the last year.

Loneliness can make a person feel unloved, or that they're meant to be alone. Feeling lonely isn't in itself a mental health problem, but the two are strongly linked. Having a mental health problem increases your chances of feeling lonely, and feeling lonely can have a negative impact on your mental health.

from [counsel.acadiau.ca](http://counsel.acadiau.ca)

## Remember:

- Although most people need some kind of social contact to maintain good mental health, everyone has different social needs.
- You may be someone who is content with a few close friends, or you may need a large group of friends and acquaintances to feel satisfied.
- Feeling lonely is a common, human emotion experienced by everyone at times. You aren't defective or strange for feeling lonely.

# Myths & Facts

## Loneliness is caused by being alone

While you may be more susceptible to loneliness and depression from being alone for long periods of time, there are many people who are very active in group settings, hang out in crowded environments, and work around large numbers of people who are just as lonely as those in isolation. Likewise there are many people who are frequently alone who feel more re-energized, more productive, happy and content than when they're with large numbers of people.

## Getting into a new relationship will end your loneliness

Although it is true that having a meaningful relationship can help you feel connected and happy, you shouldn't depend on your partner to eliminate loneliness from your life.

## Only certain kinds of people feel lonely

Loneliness does not discriminate by age or personality type.

## Having sex will eliminate loneliness

While sex can be very enjoyable, it's not going to cure loneliness. It's certainly not a reason to push yourself to go out and hook up with others. Some people feel lonely particularly because of sex, as it can draw attention to the lack of a meaningful relationship with those they are having sex with.

## Being an “only child” or the youngest makes you more susceptible to loneliness

Numerous studies on family sizes and development show there is no relationship between the number of children and how lonely they feel. It is based along the same common myth that if we interact with more people we will become less lonely.

## Resist the Temptation to Perpetuate Loneliness!

Once people are lonely, they are more inclined to use counterproductive coping strategies like isolation, sleep, alcohol, and drugs. Break the cycle with a problem-focused strategy and take charge.

# Take Action

- Visit the Student Counselling Centre on campus
- Connect with a loved one and tell them how you're feeling.
- Volunteer somewhere - it will let you interact with people while doing something valuable.
- Join a student group.
  - Becoming a member of a student club can be a great way to meet new people and enjoy the 'student experience.' There are many clubs on campus for students who share common interests, ranging from hobbies, social causes, religion, culture, and more.
  - The following link lists all the student clubs through UMSU that are available to join. Find one that suits you and get involved today!
  - <https://umsu.ca/student-clubs-associations/student-clubs/>
  - You can also check in with your department or faculty for available associations.
- Take care of yourself - shower regularly, exercise, go for walks, and make sure you're sleeping well.
- If you aren't comfortable with a lot of interaction yet, try going somewhere that you aren't expected to socialize a lot right away. Try a cafe, a sports group, or trying a new class.
- Don't hide away or avoid people. When you have plans with someone, do your best to follow through.
- Take initiative and talk to other people, rather than waiting for them to talk to you.

# UM Resources

## Loneliness

### **Student Counselling Centre (SCC)**

The SCC provides students with supports for their mental wellness. The offer offers individual counselling, workshops, and groups.

474 UMSU University Centre

204 474-8592

<https://umanitoba.ca/student-supports/student-health-and-wellness/student-counselling-centre-scc>

### **Health and Wellness**

The Health and Wellness Educator is a Registered Psychiatric Nurse and available to talk about health and wellness topics.

469 UMSU University Centre (within the SCC)

204-295-9032

[healthandwellness@umanitoba.ca](mailto:healthandwellness@umanitoba.ca)

<https://umanitoba.ca/student-supports/health-wellness>

### **Empower Me**

Empower Me is a service that is available to UMSU and UMGSA members that have student insurance through the university.

Empower Me, which has a range of specialists that can provide individualized support by phone, video conference, or by an in-person visit, depending on COVID-19.

[https://studentcare.ca/rte/en/IHaveAPlan\\_UniversityofManitoba\\_EmpowerMe\\_EmpowerMe](https://studentcare.ca/rte/en/IHaveAPlan_UniversityofManitoba_EmpowerMe_EmpowerMe)

### **Indigenous Student Centre (ISC)**

The Indigenous Student Centre welcomes and supports Indigenous students and offers programming for students at any level of study, including Indigenous leadership development. They also provide opportunities for students, staff and the wider community to learn about First Nations, Inuit and Métis culture.

Migizii Agamik - Bald Eagle Lodge

[isc@umanitoba.ca](mailto:isc@umanitoba.ca)

204-474-8850

<https://umanitoba.ca/indigenous/student-experience>

### **Healthy U**

Healthy U provides students with health and wellness resources.

[healthyuofm@umanitoba.ca](mailto:healthyuofm@umanitoba.ca)

<https://www.healthyuofm.com/>

### **Spirituality Services**

One-on-one emotional and spiritual support. Recognize, affirm and work with your existing values and beliefs.

528 UMSU University Centre

[spiritualcare@umanitoba.ca](mailto:spiritualcare@umanitoba.ca)

204-298-2467

<https://umanitoba.ca/student-supports/spiritual-services>

# UM Resources

## Loneliness

### Canadian Mental Health Association

CMHA offers a variety of workshops and groups related to mental health and well-being including topics such as depression and sadness. This may be an opportunity for education as well as to meet new people who share similar interests and/or challenges.

General Line: 204-982-6100

[office@cmhawpg.mb.ca](mailto:office@cmhawpg.mb.ca)

<https://cmha.ca/>

### Anxiety Disorders Association of Manitoba (ADAM)

ADAM offers workshops to help manage symptoms of anxiety. In addition, ADAM has a peer support line where you can connect with a peer 1:1 to discuss what you may have been feeling lately.

Sometimes person to person contact is what we need.

204-925-0600

<https://adam.mb.ca/programs/peer-support>

### Mood Disorders Association of

### Manitoba (MDAM)

MDAM offers a variety of workshops and groups related to mental health including feelings of sadness or depression. This may be an opportunity to educate yourself on specific well-being topics as well as meet new people who share similar interests and challenges.

General Line: 204-786-0987

[info@moodmb.ca](mailto:info@moodmb.ca)

<http://www.mooddisordersmanitoba.ca/contact/>

### Volunteer Manitoba

Meeting new people can be hard and feel outside of your comfort zone. If you are looking to connect with individuals with similar interests, volunteering might be a place for you to start!

<https://www.volunteermanitoba.ca>